Danny Thomas, St. Jude Honored

On February 16, 2012, the USPS issued in Memphis, Tenn., a Forever (45¢) commemorative honoring Danny Thomas. The stamp also recognizes the life-saving work being done by the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis.

Tim O'Brien created the artwork for the Danny Thomas stamp, which was designed by Greg Breeding. William J. Glicker served as art director. The Danny Thomas stamp is being issued in panes of 20 self-adhesive Forever® stamps.

As the star of the popular sitcom "Make Room for Daddy," Danny Thomas was the consummate entertainer—but behind all the anecdotes and jokes was a serious humanitarian. In 1962, in gratitude for prayers answered, Thomas opened St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee, where children receive treatment for catastrophic diseases regardless of race, religion, or a family's ability to pay. "No child," Thomas insisted, "should die in the dawn of life."

The Danny Thomas stamp features an oil-on-panel painting showing a smiling, tuxedo-clad Thomas in the foreground and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in the background.

"Make Room for Daddy," which aired from 1953 through 1964, earned Thomas an Emmy for Best Actor Starring in a Regular Series, and he later produced such television hits as The Andy Griffith Show, The Dick Van Dyke Show, and The Mod Squad—but Thomas saw St. Jude Children's Research Hospital as his ultimate legacy. Since its founding, St. Jude has helped dramatically increase childhood cancer survival rates across America and around the world.

"Throughout his career, Danny Thomas received many honors, including a 1953 Emmy Award and the Congressional Gold Medal," said Guy Cottrell, chief postal inspector, U.S. Postal Service, who was the dedicating official. "Today, through the issuance of this new stamp, his inspirational life story, and the story of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, will be shared with countless others through the U.S. Mail."

Cottrell encouraged wide use of the stamp. "Most of all, we would like to see these stamps displayed prominently on cards and letters," he said. "That way, they can spread the word about St. Jude Children's Research Hospital to homes and offices across the nation and around the world."

Joining Cottrell to dedicate the stamp were Tony Thomas, son of Danny Thomas and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital board member; Richard C. Shadyac Jr., chief executive officer, ALSAC/St. Jude; Dr. William E. Evans, director and chief executive officer, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital; and Stephen Kearney, manager, Stamp Services, U.S. Postal Service.

About St. Jude

In 1962, Thomas founded St. Jude with a mission to save the lives of children everywhere. He fervently believed that "no child should die in the dawn of life." Thomas wanted to create a hopeful place that was accepting of all children whether or not the family could afford treatment.

Today, St. Jude is the only pediatric cancer research hospital where no family ever pays St. Jude for anything—St. Jude covers the cost of travel, lodging and food for patients and a family member. For 50 years, St. Jude has advanced treatment of such childhood diseases as cancer, saving the lives of children around the world. Research at St. Jude has changed how the world treats leukemia, brain tumors and sickle cell disease, helping push survival rates for childhood cancers from less than 20 percent in 1962 to almost 80 percent today.

And Fitness for a Cure

Fitness for a Cure began when St. Jude supporter Sherri Sarrouf decided to host an evening event to raise money and awareness for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. In 1999, Sherri put together a team of fitness professionals and dance performers who believed that those who are strong in mind and body should give back to the sick and less fortunate. Attendees of the inaugural event left feeling energized from the performers, the upbeat music and the exercise demonstrations. Most importantly, everyone felt great about giving to such a lifesaving organization and motivated to exercise!

Fitness for a Cure is a year-long effort culminating in two unique events held on the same day at the Lowell Memorial Auditorium in Lowell, Mass. A family event that provides adults and youngsters with an afternoon of fun, fitness and philanthropy; and a semi-formal evening gala featuring a cocktail reception, dinner, silent and live auction and live entertainment.

The highlight of the Fitness for a Cure events is the high-powered presentation of the St. Jude Performance Team. The team is open to anyone over the age of five. Members dedicate themselves to the fund-raiser by attending lively monthly practices beginning in November, with additional practices in the months of February and March, all on Sundays.

Since its inception, Fitness for a Cure has raised more than $2.4 million for the kids of St. Jude, but St. Jude still needs your help to fulfill Danny Thomas' dream to save the lives of children everywhere.

For additional information on the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and Fitness for a Cure, please go to:

http://fitnessforacure.com/